Ground Water Management and Protection

Ground water quality management is included as a priority environmental issue in a 1985 State-EPA Agreement because EPA and Arizona agree that there is a need to coordinate EPA's new evolving National Ground Water Strategy with the state's existing ground water management program.

In May 1986, the Arizona Legislature passed a landmark Environmental Quality Act that provides for strong pollution control and remedial action measures. In addition, several other bills impacting water quality management—e.g., dry wells, storage tanks, and recharge—were passed; these bills strengthen control of adverse practices concerning ground water.

The Arizona Department of Water Resources is responsible for water quantity management. The Arizona Department of Health Services is the designated water quality management agency by both state and federal .aw. The Arizona Ground Water Management Act, enacted on June 12, 1980, is the first comprehensive legislative framework for managing the ground water resources of the state. Its stated goal is reaching "safe yield" :or water-scarce areas of the state. This act created the Department of Wa-:er Resources and made it responsible for administering the law's complex Drovisions. It established four Active Management Areas—areas in which ntensive ground water management is needed because of the large and continuous ground water overdraft. All classes of uses must comply with heir designated conservation requirement according to the current Water Management Plan. All wells must be registered and metered, and a with-Irawal fee is charged for the amount of water withdrawn. The fee is used >artially for administration of the department and during future manage-nent periods will help to fund water augmentation projects. Another im- >ortant method used to protect ground water in Arizona is the requirement or ground water discharge permits, which apply to all activities not other-vise regulated from a ground water standpoint such as large septic tanks, nine tailings ponds, and National Pollution Discharge Elimination System NPDES) discharges. All future water plans must incorporate water quality n the management scheme.

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)verview of Ground Water Resources

More than 10 million people in California, or 46 percent of the total pop-lation, are served by ground water supplies. Even more significant is the act that of the 12.5 billion gallons per day of ground water produced, 39